

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 14196 040956Z

16

ACTION EA-14

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DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6435

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14196

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

REF: BANGKOK 13674

1. DESPITE CONTINUATION OF DUSIT THANI HOTEL STRIKE, LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS HAVE EASED SOMEWHAT SINCE REFTEL REPORTING SANYA GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM TO ALTER AND ENFORCE EXISTING LABOR LAWS. OUTLOOK FOR SETTLEMENT OF DUSIT THANI STRIKE, BY CONTRAST, HAS DARKENED WITH ANNOUNCEMENT FROM MANAGEMENT SIDE, AS REPORTED IN PRESS SEPTEMBER 4, THAT IT WAS SUSPENDING ALL EMPLOYEES WHO DID NOT RETURN TO WORK ON SEPTEMBER 5 AND ALSO THAT IT WOULD NOT ACCEPT ARBITRATOR PROPOSED BY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL PHNON UDOMPHONG. LEADER OF STRIKE, THOEDPHUM CHAIDEE (PRESIDENT OF HOTEL AND HOSTEL WORKERS' ASSOCIATION), HAS REACTED SHARPLY TO THIS MOVE AND HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL ENLIST SUPPORT FROM OTHER HOTEL WORKERS IF MANAGEMENT DOES NOT CHANGE ITS ATTITUDE.

2. THE STRIKE AT THE FEDDERS AIR CONDITIONING COMPANY HAS BEEN SETTLED WITH THE CONTENTIOUS ISSUE OF REMOVING CERTAIN SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEES TEMPORARILY RESOLVED BY AGREEMENT TO APPOINT A COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE CHARGES  
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 14196 040956Z

MADE AGAINST THEM. BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO ACCEPT THE

COMMITTEE'S REPORT. JAPANESE OWNED JUTE MILL CONTINUES ON STRIKE WITH THE ISSUE OF REMOVING CERTAIN SUPERVISORY EMPLOYEES STILL UNRESOLVED.

3. IN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO FORESTALL RUMORED THREAT OF STRIKE IN STATE ENTERPRISES FOR 300 BAHT COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE, GOVERNMENT HAS MOVED TO DRAW UP A PLAN TO ASSURE GREATER UNIFORMITY IN REMUNERATION OF ALL TYPES FOR SUCH EMPLOYEES. CABINET REPORTEDLY HAS AGREED THAT SALARY ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE MADE FROM OCTOBER. ACCORDING TO PRESS SOURCE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO APPROVED ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC RECESSION UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF FINANCE MINISTER. PRIME MINISTER SANYA HAS APPEALED FOR MODERATION AND CALM IN LABOR RELATIONS. MEANWHILE, COST OF LIVING INDEX REGISTERED A CONTINUING DOWNTREND WITH A DECLINE OF .3 PERCENT FOR JULY OVER JUNE.

4. COMMENT: MAJOR FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR APPARENT DECLINE IN RASH OF STRIKES REPORTED REFTEL VERY PROBABLY INCLUDE APPEAL OF PRIME MINISTER (WHO STILL HAS CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE AMONG WORKERS), GOVERNMENT'S EARNEST OF GOOD INTENTIONS AS INDICATED BY CHANGES MADE IN LABOR LAW (REFTEL) AND CONTINUING DECLINE IN COST OF LIVING INDEX. LATTER DEVELOPMENT HAS GIVEN REALITY TO VARIOUS GOVERNMENT MEASURES DESIGNED TO REDUCE OR STABILIZE COST OF LIVING. ALSO APPARENT THAT MANY COMPANIES ARE GRANTING WAGE INCREASES IN ATTEMPT FORESTALL WORK STOPPAGES. NEVERTHELESS, LABOR DISSATISFACTION CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE IN RESPONSE TO PERSISTING INFLATION BUT IT IS LESS LIKELY TO BE EXPRESSED IN WORK STOPPAGES, AT LEAST UNTIL PRICE TRENDS AGAIN TURN UPWARD.  
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